



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

*All students prepared
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REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Civic Education Demonstration Districts

2019

Authorizing legislation: [RCW 28A.300.485](#)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Demonstration District Activities.....	6
Conclusion and Next Steps	7

Appendices

Appendix A: Demographics of Sunnyside and Franklin Pierce School Districts	9–10
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List of Tables

Table 1: Sunnyside Student Demographics.....	9
Table 2: Franklin Pierce Student Demographics.....	10

Executive Summary

The 2018 Legislature created a demonstration project to implement and enhance an in-depth civics education program in K–12 classrooms. OSPI selected two districts, Franklin Pierce School District and Sunnyside School District, to serve as demonstration sites for the 2018–19 school year.

These districts were required to complete the following:

- Implement and assess an in-depth civics education plan including the 6 proven practices for K–12 civics education;
- Collaborate with local programs and agencies to expand after school and summer civics education opportunities;
- Monitor and report on penetration of civics education in and out of schools;
- Ensure that underserved (rural, low income, etc.) students are prioritized in implementation;
- Develop evaluation and standards procedures that can be reproduced elsewhere; and
- Provide an annual report on the demonstration sites on December 1 of each year to legislative committees overseeing K–12 education.

Participant feedback from the first-year implementation of demonstration sites highlights a larger, more immediate need for statewide resources and professional development to implement high quality, in-depth civics education programs. Therefore, in the upcoming fiscal year, the resources allocated to the demonstration districts will be better-utilized creating comprehensive K–12 civics materials and professional development for districts statewide as they prepare to implement a .5 credit stand-alone civics course.

Introduction

Civics education teaches students how to be active, informed, and engaged citizens. HB 1896 (2018) further emphasizes the importance of civics education by:

- Establishing an expanded Civics Education Teacher Training Program;
- Transferring administration of Washington History Day to OSPI;
- Requiring districts to provide a mandatory one-half credit stand-alone course in civics for each high school student; and
- Creating demonstration sites to implement and enhance an in-depth civics education program in K–12 classrooms.

Demonstration schools or districts can be an efficient way to work through barriers to statewide implementation, and to develop or share resources with other districts across the state. The legislature directed OSPI to select two districts as demonstration sites to:

1. Implement and assess an in-depth civics education plan including the 6 proven practices for K–12 civics education;
2. Collaborate with local programs and agencies to expand after school and summer civics education opportunities;
3. Monitor and report on penetration of civics education in and out of schools;
4. Ensure that underserved (rural, low income, etc.) students are prioritized in implementation;
5. Develop evaluation and standards procedures that can be reproduced elsewhere; and
6. Provide an annual report on the demonstration sites on December 1 of each year to legislative committees overseeing K–12 education.

Demonstration sites were required to be diverse geographically, demographically, and in size. OSPI selected Franklin Pierce School District in Pierce County and Sunnyside School District in Yakima County as demonstration districts. See Appendix A for more information about the demographics of these two districts.

Six Proven Practices

According to [Guardian of Democracy: Successor Report to the Civic Mission of Schools](#), there are six proven practices for enhancing civics education:

1. **Classroom Instruction:** providing instruction in government, history, economics, law, and democracy.

2. **Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues:** Incorporating discussion of current local, national, and international issues and events into the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives.
3. **Service Learning:** Designing and implementing programs that provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction.
4. **Extracurricular Activities:** Offering opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities outside of the classroom.
5. **School Governance:** Encouraging student participation in school governance.
6. **Simulations of Democratic Processes:** Encouraging students to participate in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

Washington State Social Studies educators are part of a national resurgence in civics education. The [C3 \(college, career, and civic readiness\) standards](#) put out by the National Council for the Social Studies, as well as [Washington's new Social Studies standards](#) encourage teachers to incorporate the six proven practices into their classroom routines, **in** particular with an emphasis on Service Learning and Simulations of Democratic Processes.

Partner Organizations

A critical component of success for this demonstration project was partnership with organizations that conduct civics education work in Washington state. Both Sunnyside and Franklin Pierce school districts had established relationships with the Civic Learning Council (CLC)—formerly known as the Council for Public Legal Education (CPLÉ). The CLC aims to “promote public understanding of the law and civic rights and responsibilities,” through encouraging, supporting, and promoting civics education efforts statewide.

The CLC supports pre-existing relationships between each district and organizations such as the League of Women Voters, which provides presentations on civics education in both school districts, and the YMCA, which runs the Youth in Government program. The CLC was also able to secure the services of Leveraging Equity and Access in Democracy Education (LEADE), a project of the University of California Riverside and UCLA. LEADE is known for their national reputation working with local civics learning partnerships and has experience planning for and evaluating local civics learning partnerships in Chicago, Oakland, Riverside, and other schools.

Demonstration District Activities

Franklin Pierce and Sunnyside school districts reported the following activities in support of the legislative requirements of HB 1896 (2018):

1. Implement and assess an in-depth civics education plan including the six proven practices for K–12 civics education.
 - a. Members of the Civic Learning Council (CLC) collaborated with Sunnyside School District to develop their school mission to make it college, career and life ready, and include civic readiness.
 - b. Teachers from Franklin Pierce School District brought students to serve on a jury in high school mock trials in Dec 2018 and May 2019.
 - c. The CLC provided a “Mock Trial” professional development for all social studies teachers at Franklin Pierce high schools on May 1, 2019.
2. Collaborate with local programs and agencies to expand after school and summer civics education opportunities.
 - a. Members of the Civic Learning Council (CLC) worked with schools by engaging in multiple onsite meetings with administrators at each school district, teacher leaders at each site, and local community and government entities.
 - b. iCivicsWA provided a training with Justice Debra Stephens on Comparing Washington and Federal Constitutions for all social studies teachers at Franklin Pierce on December 5, 2018.
 - c. YMCA’s Youth in Government taught Youth and Government at schools, impacting 75 Franklin Pierce students in both classroom activities and a residential Youth Legislature civics practicum.
 - d. The League of Women Voters created a roster of names and organizations willing to go into classes to help present civics education.
3. Monitor and report on penetration of civics education in and out of schools
 - a. The CLC and Leveraging Equity and Access to Democratic Education (LEADE) supported demonstration districts by collecting information from students and teachers about the gaps in teaching the six proven practices of civic learning and areas where the school districts needed the most improvement.
 - b. Members of the Civic Learning Council (CLC) worked extensively with LEADE, a project of University of California Riverside and University of California Los Angeles to establish a baseline of information on each of the two school districts and to measure change over time. They devised survey questions tested by

students for readability and focus group questions. The CLC worked with each school district for LEADE staff to conduct these surveys and focus groups.

4. Ensure that underserved (rural, low income, etc.) students are prioritized in implementation
 - a. Washington High School convened a “Pledge to Act/Voter Registration Forum” on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day (January 16, 2019) attended by Franklin Pierce School District students and teachers, OSPI staff, the Pierce County Auditor, and Secretary of State Office staff.
 - b. SEA MAR Latino Educational Achievement Project (LEAP) engaged Latinx youth in a 2.5 day education conference that provided hands-on experience educating legislators on issues impacting Latinx communities and youth.
 - c. The CLC made available two free teacher scholarships for each partnership to participate in an online college-credit bearing course, Educating for Informed and Equitable Voting offered by the LEADE partner, University of California at Riverside. Two Sunnyside teachers took advantage of this opportunity.
5. Develop evaluation and standards procedures that can be reproduced elsewhere.
 - a. LEADE Created a Civic Engagement School Report for both Sunnyside and Franklin Pierce School Districts.
 - b. The reports reflect responses to a survey created by the 2019 Washington Civic Learning Initiative which collected data from middle and high school students including topics such as the responsiveness of school leaders to student’s school policy concerns, and how often students are provided opportunities to participate in youth-led civic programs.
 - c. The reports collected some usable data; however, they provide no suggestions for application of their findings to other districts to improve practice.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Selected demonstration districts and their partner organizations made progress during the 2018–19 school year in strengthening their local civics education programs. There were, however, challenges to implementation. For instance, demonstration districts found it difficult to spend the available funding. Demonstration districts shared that some of the most effective activities were low cost or completed through alternative funding streams and could have been implemented without demonstration district funding. In addition, the lack of a single point of

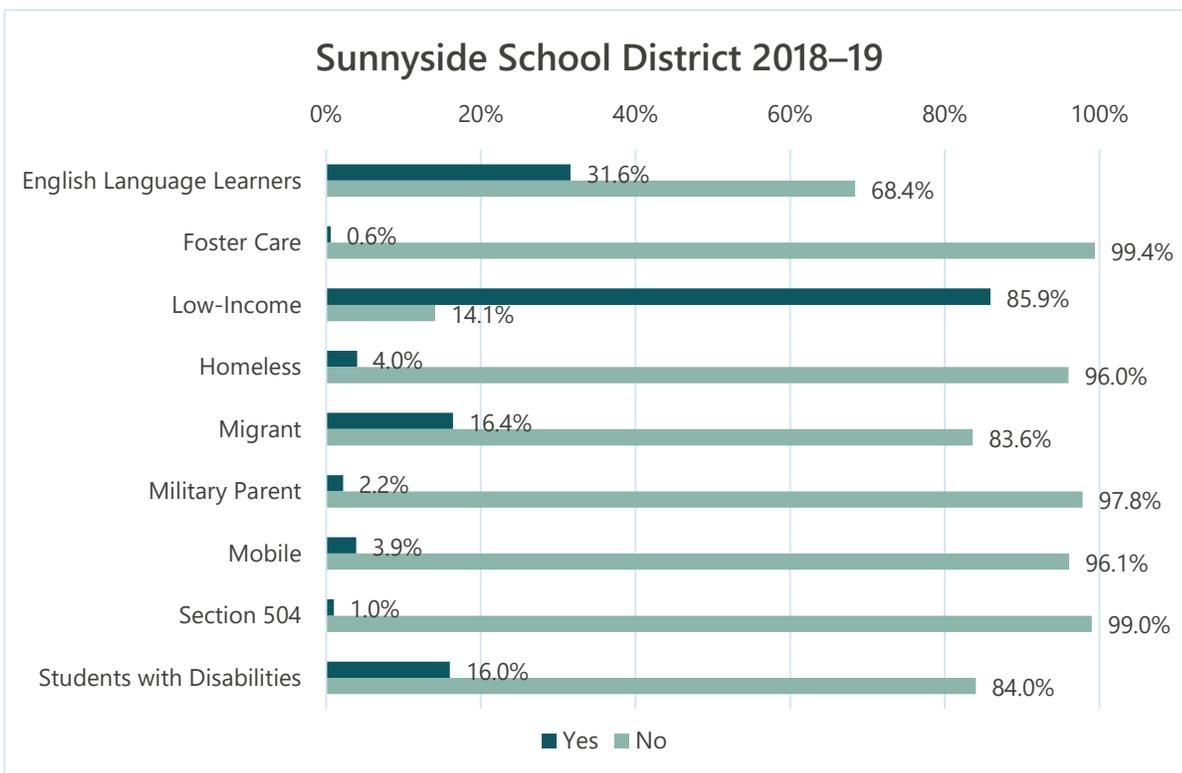
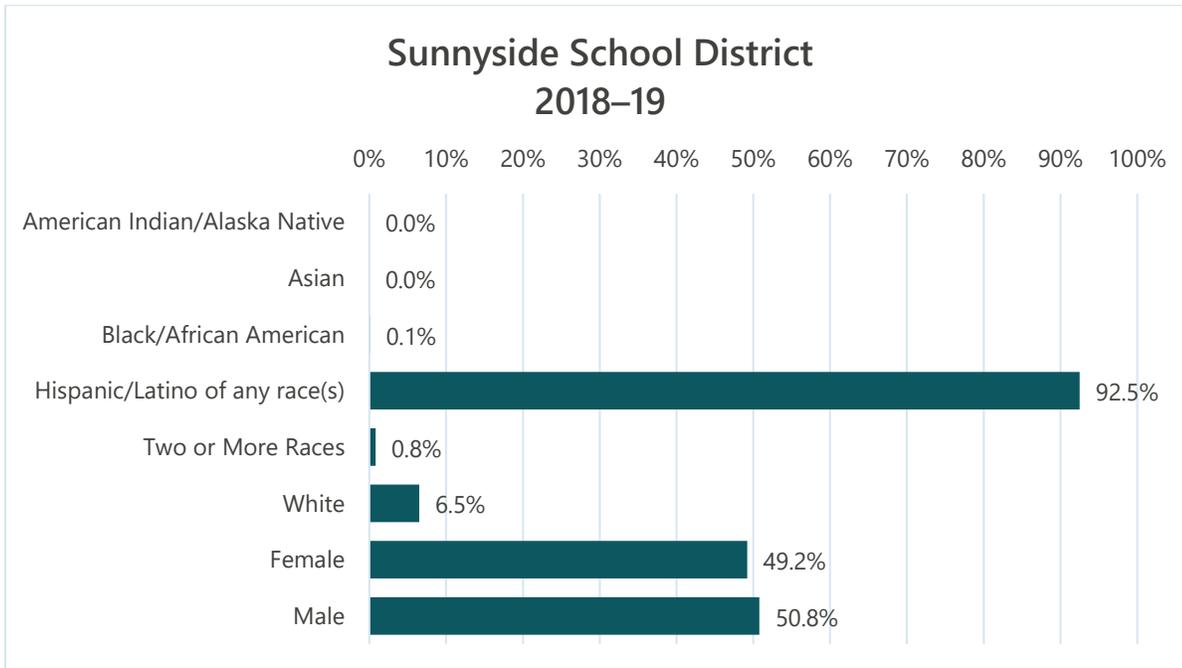
contact in one district made completion of the required activities difficult to coordinate across all grades and school buildings.

Final evaluation of the first-year implementation of demonstration sites highlights a larger, more immediate need for statewide resources and professional development to implement high quality, in-depth civics education programs. Therefore, due to the limited funding provided to support the civics initiatives outlined in HB 1896, for the next year of the biennium, OSPI will focus financial resources on creating comprehensive K–12 civics materials and providing professional development for districts statewide as they prepare to implement a .5 credit stand-alone civics course.

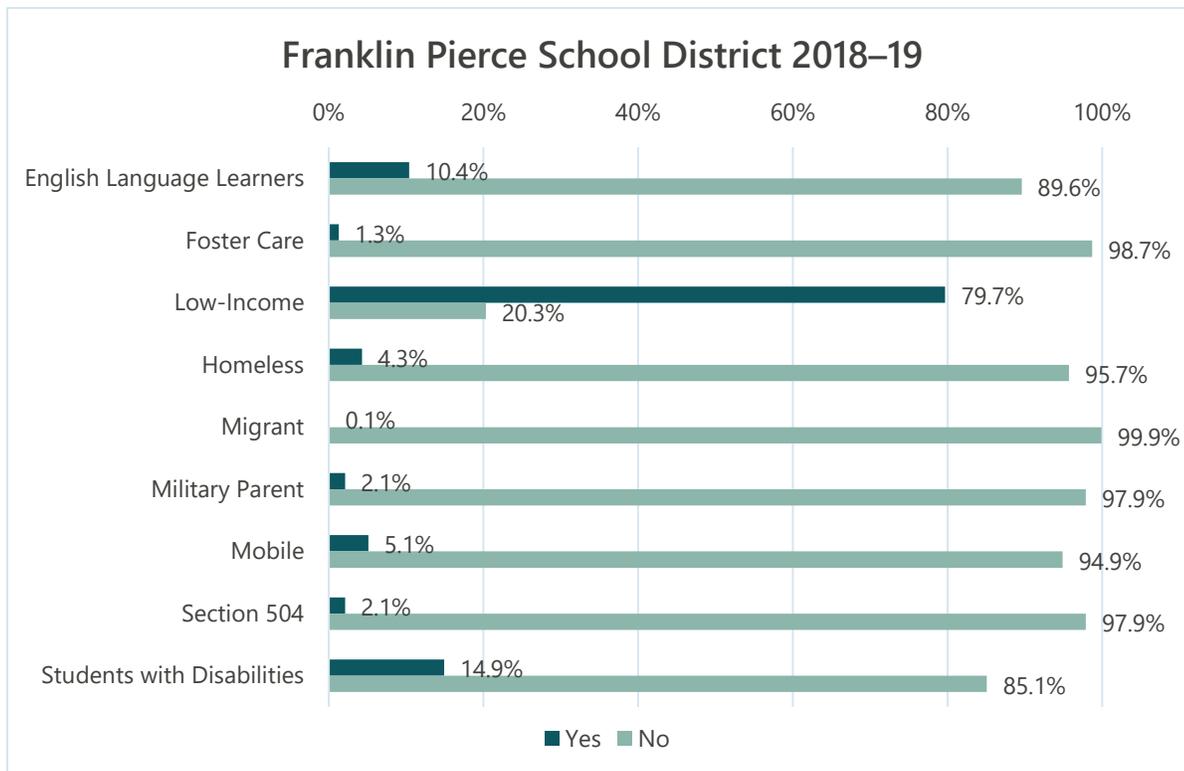
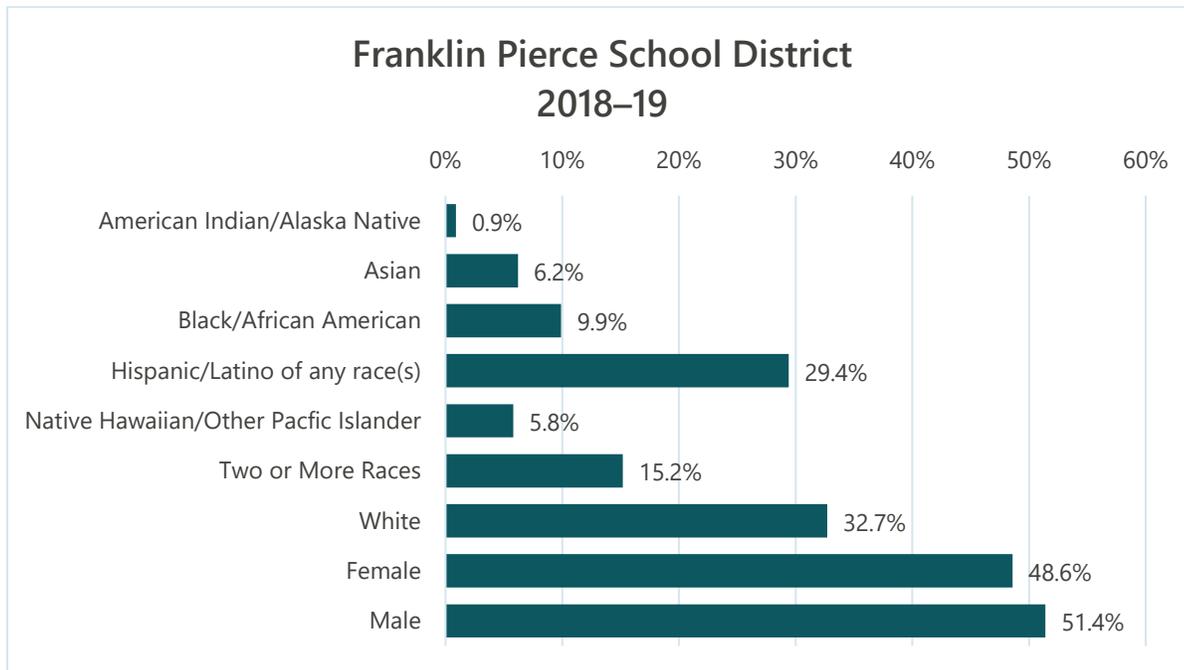
APPENDIX A: District Demographics

Sunnyside Total Student Population: 6,855

Source: OSPI Report Card



Franklin Pierce Total Student Population: 8,078





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